

CM Burroughs

ABOUT MYSELF, THIS MUCH WILL SUFFICE

I am colored.

I was Colored.

I don't have a favorite color.

You are smoky black.

You are bone white.

I love you.

You are connected to the ship.

In chains/with whip.

I love you/I think about what you've done.

I descend from a trans-Atlantic chain gang.

I descend from half-breeds and other things.

I have never been to Africa.

I love Those people over There.

AFRICAN AMERICAN ON INDEPENDENCE DAY, OR CHAIN-LINKED

Have nothing to do with
the fireworks blasting
down those streets.

Stay far off and watch
color wash the sky. That
black guy there is about
the same business. Share
with him.

A book of Ifs provides
no hypothetical answers.
If her head is full of bees...

What happens then, when
the firework doesn't explode or
it does, but against the hand, still
on the ground.

Well, I'm too far away to see.
I can't tell you specifics, but
I'll bet some Joe lost a hand.

Share with him.

I clap to wake myself. I clap
to appreciate the fantastic
green watering the sky.

THE POWER OF THE VULNERABLE BODY

Love,
precursor to our shank-less entrances. Nothing strapped at the ankle or
in the mouth
but 2 pairs of six. We felt ourselves fortunate to have beds and bodies
to lay
inside of at night. Like a man in the female outhouse, he and I tried to hurt
each other
so that the public could not break our skin; we used our canines/birdshots/
live matches/
rope. We wanted to do everything that could be done to us. We used
Nth words,
which did the swift damage. There was a gash where he said “[
!]”
Thankfully, he could sew. I was all new within the week except for the
weeping.

He had to hold my face in his hands and say, “look at me. I love you”

several

times before my eyes washed and it was him again. We strode into

light.

For recovery, should we have underestimated the public, we stored the chains

in black boxes.